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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AGENCY  
Washington 25, D. C.

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LEGUME AND GRASS SEED HARVESTING PROGRAM

The Situation

Farmers are threatened with a serious shortage of legume and grass seeds -- a vital link in food production now and for the future.

During the past 2 years supplies have dwindled to dangerously low levels. Unfavorable weather and increased demands for food and forage crops have resulted in failure to produce sufficient legumes and grass seeds to meet estimated needs.

Increases in 1944 seed production are essential if new seedings in 1945 are to be sufficient for hay and pasture production and for sod acreage in regular crop rotations to maintain yields on cropland. New seedings in 1943 were the smallest in years and seedings this year apparently were still smaller.

Increased Importance

Grasses and legumes are vital in livestock production. In wartime they are more important than ever because of the increased need for meat, and dairy, and other products. Since pasture crops are harvested by the livestock, they also afford more economical use of labor and machinery. Properly handled, hay and pasture crops are efficient sources of protein feed for livestock and reduce the need for protein concentrates. It is estimated that the protein value of hay produced from the 12 million acres of clover and alfalfa seeded annually exceeds that produced from an equivalent acreage of grass hay by an amount equal to 4 million tons of protein meal, or about two-thirds of the oil meal available for feeding this year.

Growing of legumes and grasses has a direct bearing upon future yields of other crops. In order to maintain satisfactory yields and to prevent excessive erosion under wartime strain of peak production, legumes and grasses must be grown in rotation with other crops.

If farmers are to maintain or increase pasture and hay production, they must have seed supplies. Desired hay and pasture acreages cannot be maintained, however, unless there is a much larger seed harvest in 1944 than in either of the past two years. It is urgent that more than the usual percentage of grass and legume acreages be harvested for seed. Since the indicated production of hay as of July 1 was considerably above average, farmers should be able to leave the required acreage for seed harvesting.



Nations liberated from Axis domination must also have seed as quickly as possible to help reestablish necessary forage crops. Requirements for field seeds during the next 12 months will exceed our estimated 1944 production by millions of pounds.

#### The Critical Seeds

ALFALFA - Alfalfa seed supplies are the smallest in many years, particularly northern-grown seed. Alfalfa seed is especially needed for use by American farmers, who had only 56 million pounds for planting in 1943, as compared with a 5-year (1937-41) average of 65 million pounds. With smaller seedings in 1943, the acreage of alfalfa hay is nearly one million acres less this year. Below-normal seedings in 1944 point to another decline in alfalfa acreage next year. To plant more alfalfa next year, we must harvest more seed this year.

RED CLOVER - Supplies of red clover seed have declined each year since 1940. Our total supply for 1944 was about 10 percent below the previous year. More than four million pounds were requested for export, but very little could be shipped because of the urgent needs in this country. Only a little seed is left over from last year. Our supply of seed for next year is the seed we harvest this year.

ALSIKE CLOVER - Two small crops of alsike clover seed reduced domestic supplies to about 14 million pounds, one-third below normal. Even after cutting exports to 10 percent of last year and importing one million pounds, only approximately 90 percent of normal use was provided in 1944. Our 1944 seed harvest is our 1945 seed supply.

SWEET CLOVER - Production of sweet clover in 1943 was the smallest since 1922 and only about one-half the 10-year average. Carryover of old seed is very low. Total U. S. supply for 1944 was only enough for half the usual seeding. Sweet clover is an important green manure crop in a large part of the Corn Belt.

LADINO CLOVER - It would take more than one million pounds of this clover seed to meet the indicated demand for 1944. This is at least three times as much seed as was harvested in either of the past 2 years. Mixed ladino-alsike clover seed can be harvested and that seed used to good advantage.

SUDAN GRASS - Sudan grass generally is recognized as a most desirable emergency forage crop. In case of drought, large supplies of the seed would be needed. A harvest of at least 60 million pounds this year is needed to provide adequate and safe supplies of seed for 1945.

#### AAA Special Seed Program

In recognition of the critical seed situation, Congress has provided a supplemental appropriation of \$12,500,000 to be used under the 1944 Agricultural Conservation Program to encourage the harvesting of seeds urgently needed in the war food program.



Seed harvesting payments made on both an acreage and a poundage basis are as follows:

1. Acreage Basis - Payments up to \$3.50 per acre for harvesting legume and grass seeds of the kinds designated in State bulletins for the 1944 Agricultural Conservation Program. All acreage and allowance limitations heretofore applicable to this practice have been removed.
2. Poundage Basis - Additional payments on a poundage basis for alfalfa, red clover, and alsike, of which supplies are critically short. The rates of payment are  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents per pound for harvesting red clover seed and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents per pound for alsike and alfalfa seed. Payment will be based on the pounds harvested (clean basis), to qualify for which the seed must be sold to a dealer or cleaned and tested. These payments will not be limited by the farm allowance.

Complete details on the seed harvesting practice are in all county AAA offices.

#### Price Supports

As another means of encouraging increased production of seed, the Government will support prices for most principal legume and grass seeds by means of non-recourse loans to producers or purchases from producers. These supports will apply only to seeds which are cleaned, bagged, tagged, and delivered to a warehouse and that meet prescribed standards of purity and germination. Discounts are provided for seeds which fail to meet basic specifications.

Support prices on the three seeds, to which poundage payments also apply, are:

Alfalfa -- Northern, 33 cents a pound for common seed and 40 cents for certified; Central, 30 cents for common and 37 cents for certified; Oklahoma, "approved origin", 30 cents; Southern, 26 cents for common. Red Clover, 28 cents a pound for common seed, and 34 cents for certified. Alsike, 25 cents a pound.

#### What You Can Do

State and County AAA Committeemen can encourage harvesting of seed from legume and grass crops by:

1. Informing every farmer able to harvest seed of the critical need for increased production this year.
2. Explaining through personal contacts, letters, meetings, or otherwise, provisions of the revised seed harvesting program for 1944 and 1944 support prices.



3. Cooperating in arrangements before harvest for proper handling of seed, and informing producers of these arrangements. Local seedsmen should be given maximum encouragement to become active in these arrangements.

#### When To Do It

In view of the short time remaining, information activities to encourage 1944 seed harvesting should be carried out as early as possible, particularly in the key producing States.

Work should be started in all States well in advance of seed harvest. For alfalfa, the beginning of 1943 seed harvesting in different States ranged from August 9 to October 1; for red clover, it ranged from August 27 to October 2; for alsike clover, from July 19 to August 20; for ladino clover, from August 1 to 15; for sweet clover, from July to September 2; for sudan grass, from August 22 to October 5.

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